

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00481 101044Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 OMB-01 DHA-02
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R 101010Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7861
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0481

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT LA TH
SUBJECT: RESISTANCE ACTIVITY IN LAOS - THE VIEW FROM UDORN

REF BANGKOK 5108

1. BANGKOK INVITED AND I OFFERED MY COMMENTS ON DRAFT OF REFTEL BEFORE IT WAS DISPATCHED. THEY HAD TO DO WITH CLARIFICATION OF SOURCES, THE FACT THAT I FOUND NOTHING PARTICULARLY NEW IN THE REPORT AND THE FACT THAT IT AGREED WITH OUR EARLIER GENERAL CONCLUSION THAT THE INSURGENCY POSED A PROBLEM TO THE LPDR BUT DID NOT THREATEN ITS OVERTHROW.

2. HAVING REREAD REFTEL, I THINK IT GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF THE EXISTENCE OF MORE OF A GENERALIZED "JACQUERIE" THAN I BELIEVE REALLY EXISTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH. I SHOULD LIKE TO OFFER A FEW ADDITIONAL COMMENTS WHICH MIGHT HELP PUT IT INTO WHAT I WOULD CONSIDER A BETTER PERSPECTIVE. I THINK THAT IN DES-
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SCRIBING THE CURRENT SITUATION IN LAOS WE SHOULD AVOID TERMS LIKE "MAIN RESISTANCE FORCES" AND "POPULAR SUPPORT" WHICH DO NOT MEAN VERY MUCH. THERE IS A LOT OF FIGHTING GOING ON IN LAOS, BUT NOTHING LIKE WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE LATE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970S. "MAIN FORCES" SUGGESTS A HIGHER LEVEL OF VIOLENCE THAN IS ACTUALLY TAKING PLACE TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

"POPULAR SUPPORT" IS MISLEADING. THE RESISTANCE ELEMENTS PROFIT FROM THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THE GENERAL RURAL POPULATION WHO TOTALLY LACK ENTHUSIASM FOR THE LPDR AND, WE BELIEVE, SIMPLY TRY TO KEEP OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

3. IT IS THIS GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THE POPULATION, TOGETHER WITH THE DISPROPORTION OF MEN AND RESOURCES BETWEEN LPLA/PAVN AND THE RESISTANCE ELEMENTS, RATHER THAN THE ABSENCE OR MEDIOCRITY OF LEADERSHIP THAT, WE BELIEVE, WILL DETERMINE THE INADEQUACY OF THE RESISTANCE EFFORT.

4. ALTHOUGH FORMER ROYAL LAO ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL ARE ACTIVE IN THE RESISTANCE IN THE CENTER AND SOUTH, WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION FROM WHAT WE HEAR FROM LAO AND FOREIGN SOURCES AND FROM THE LPDR ITSELF THAT THE MAIN FIGHTING AGAINST THE REGIME IS BEING DONE BY THE "MEOS". AT THE SAME TIME THE MAIN FIGHTING ON THE GOVERNMENT SIDE IS BEING DONE BY TRIBAL "LAO THEUNG" ELEMENTS WHO MAKE UP THE BULK OF THE LPLA AND BY THE VIETNAMESE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE ROLE OF THE LOWLAND LAO REMAINS, AS EVERY, SECONDARY.
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